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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE DENUCLEARIZATION OF AFRICA

Letter dated 15 October 1991 from the Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour, on behalf of the Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), to transmit to you herewith the report of the experts who met at the General Secretariat of the OAU in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 6 to 10 May 1991 to examine the modalities and elements for the preparation of a convention or treaty on the denuclearization of Africa, pursuant to paragraph 9 of General Assembly resolution 45/56 of 4 December 1990 on the denuclearization of Africa.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(Signed) Ibrahim A. GAMBARI
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Nigeria
to the United Nations

Annex

REPORT OF THE MEETING OF EXPERTS TO EXAMINE THE MODALITIES AND ELEMENTS FOR THE PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A CONVENTION OR TREATY ON THE DENUCLEARIZATION OF AFRICA

Introduction

1. By its resolution 45/56 A of 4 December 1990, the General Assembly inter alia requested the Secretary-General "to provide all necessary assistance that the Organization of African Unity may seek regarding the convening, at Addis Ababa during 1991, of a meeting of experts to examine the modalities and elements for the preparation and implementation of a convention or treaty on the denuclearization of Africa".

2. A meeting of experts was organized by the Department for Disarmament Affairs, in cooperation with the OAU, which took place in Addis Ababa from 6 to 10 May 1991. In the absence of the OAU Secretary-General, the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Ambassador Yilma Tadesse, opened the meeting. Statements were made by Ambassador Tadesse and Mr. Sola Ogunbanwo, the Senior Coordinator of the Disarmament Department's Fellowship, Training and Advisory Services Programme, at the opening meeting.

3. The following experts took part in the meeting: Dr. Hamed Ben Yamina, Director, Strategic Planning Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Algiers, Algeria; Ambassador Oluyemi Adeniji, Deputy Director General (Regions), Ministry of External Affairs, Abuja, Nigeria; Mrs. Liberata Mulamula, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of the United Republic of Tanzania to the United Nations, New York; Ambassador Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya, Permanent Representative of Zaire to the United Nations, New York; Dr. Gift Punungwe, Director, Africa Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Harare, Zimbabwe; Ambassador Ibrahim Sy, Executive Secretary, OAU, New York; Colonel Gustave Zoula, Chief, Section for Defence and Security, OAU, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; and Alhaji Ahmadu Niang, Political Officer, Section for Defence and Security, OAU, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

4. Representatives of the following countries attended as observers: Algeria, Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe.

5. Ms. Martine Letts, Alternate Representative, Australian Delegation to the Conference on Disarmament, Geneva, Switzerland, and Dr. Odette Jankowisch, Legal Division, International Atomic Energy Agency, Vienna, Austria, attended the meeting as expert-observers.

Election of officers

6. The meeting elected the following officers:

Chairmen: Ambassador Olu Adeniji
Ambassador Ibrahim Sy

Vice-Chairmen: Ambassador Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya
Mr. Sola Ogunbanwo

Rapporteur: Dr. Ahmed Ben Yamina

Report of the meeting of experts

7. Following the election of officers, the experts considered that their meeting to "examine the modalities and elements for the preparation and implementation of a convention or treaty on the denuclearization of Africa" pursuant to resolution 45/56 A was being held at an opportune time. More than 25 years after the adoption of the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa by the Assembly of African Heads of State and Government in Cairo in July 1964, it was necessary to undertake initiatives leading to an implementation of the objective of the denuclearization of Africa.

8. In this light, the Meeting of Experts at Addis Ababa from 6 to 10 May 1991 represented a significant first step. A follow-up of this process should be encouraged, particularly at a time when Africa was involved in a number of undertakings aimed at strengthening its stability and security and the economic integration of the continent through the establishment of an African Economic Community.

9. The Experts stated that an effective process of denuclearizing the continent should be incorporated into a world-wide disarmament effort and should also take into account international trends in the fields of disarmament and security. In this respect, they also pointed out that the implementation of the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa had for a long time been impeded by the prevailing global and regional armaments race, including the nuclear-arms race, and South Africa's nuclear-weapon capability. At present, Africa should endeavour to take advantage of the progress made in the field of disarmament, including nuclear disarmament, the lessening of East-West tensions and the development of the situation in South Africa.

10. They noted that since the adoption of the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa the concept of a nuclear-weapon-free zone had been further developed and implemented in Latin America (Treaty of Tlatelolco) and in the South Pacific (Treaty of Rarotonga) and that efforts were being made to transform other regions, including the Middle East, into nuclear-weapon-free zones. Moreover, studies conducted by the United Nations had further refined the concept and defined the principles and modalities of its implementation.

Africa could therefore examine the existing treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones in order to draw from them the elements useful for the specific case of the African continent.

11. Having studied resolution AHG/Res.11(I) of the Cairo Summit declaring Africa a nuclear-weapon-free zone, the experts considered that it constituted the basic political reference to be used in the process of denuclearizing Africa. However, they also pointed out that some of its elements should be revised, for example, paragraph 4 of the document, in which the United Nations General Assembly was called on to approve the declaration at its nineteenth regular session and to take all the measures necessary to convene an international conference to conclude an international treaty. The experts were of the opinion that while the United Nations might provide technical assistance in the implementation of the Declaration it would be for the OAU to convene such a conference.

12. With respect to the political conditions required for the holding of such a conference, the experts emphasized that it should be left to the Governments to determine the advisability of the conference. They felt that it was important to take advantage of the favourable international trend prevailing at present to implement the 1964 Declaration. Of course, such a conference should be adequately prepared in order to ensure its success.

13. The experts considered the question of whether the legal form of the agreement establishing Africa's denuclearized status should be that of a treaty or convention. They noted that while resolution AHG/Res.11(I) referred to a treaty, the only existing draft legal instrument on the subject was a draft convention for the denuclearization of Africa. However, it was pointed out that both Latin America and the South Pacific had been established as nuclear-weapon-free zones by treaties, rather than conventions. It was considered, however, that the question could be resolved once the content of the legal instrument had been determined and completed.

14. Broaching the question of the geographical zone to which the continental denuclearization status would apply, the experts considered that it should apply to the whole continent including the adjacent islands and recalled in this connection resolution CM/Res.676(XXXI) on "the territorial integrity of Africa and the islands surrounding the African continent". They also agreed that the convention on the Law of the Sea would be a helpful reference in defining the maritime zone

15. The experts stressed the necessity for foreign Powers exercising trusteeship responsibilities in territories or islands forming a part of Africa to commit themselves to respecting their denuclearized status, in the sense that the denuclearized status of Africa would apply fully to those islands and territories, and that they would sign a protocol specifically so stating.

16. The experts underscored the absolute need for South Africa to be subjected to the obligations deriving from Africa's status as a nuclear-weapon-free zone. In this connection, they noted that there was an essential difference between Africa on the one hand and Latin America and the South Pacific on the other in that there was a State in Africa - South Africa - which already possessed a military nuclear capability. It was therefore necessary not only to ensure that no nuclear weapons were introduced but also that those in South Africa's possession were destroyed. To that end, the experts considered that South Africa must comply with the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone and the decisions relating to it, in particular, by signing the non-proliferation Treaty and by submitting all its nuclear activities to full IAEA safeguards.

17. The experts also stressed the importance they attributed to the process of implementing the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa. In that regard, they underscored the legitimate concerns some African, including North African, countries, might have, and stressed the importance of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

18. It was also considered essential by the experts that, as a consequence of their commitment to safeguard the continent against the introduction of nuclear weapons, the States possessing such weapons should agree in a satisfactory and consistent manner not to use nuclear weapons against any African country, and to fully respect the nuclear-weapon-free status of the continent. Their adherence to the Protocols drawn up for that purpose was therefore essential. The experts noted in that connection that it was in the Mediterranean, off the coast of North Africa, that the world's greatest concentration of arms, including nuclear arms, was to be found.

19. With respect to the future convention or treaty, the experts agreed that its aim would be to prohibit nuclear weapons, not the use of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. In this connection they emphasized the legitimate right of African States to freely obtain control of nuclear technology exclusively for peaceful purposes and encouraged the African States to develop their expertise and their cooperation in this area.

20. The experts then turned to a comparative study of the process of establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones in Latin America and the South Pacific. In that connection they heard a comprehensive exposition of the Treaty of Rarotonga. Attention was drawn to the fact that some nuclear Powers had not signed the Protocols submitted to them within the framework of the Treaty of Tlatelolco and the Treaty of Rarotonga. In that context, they also stressed the need to evaluate realistically the nuclear Powers' political willingness to cooperate and to support and respect the denuclearized status of Africa.

21. Examining the elements to be included in the prohibitions and obligations covered by the future treaty or convention, the experts identified the following items which should be the object of further study:

- Development;
- Production;
- Stockpiling;
- Acquisition;
- Transfer;
- Use;
- Testing of nuclear weapons;
- Destruction of existing nuclear weapons in case of possession, as by South Africa;
- Transportation;
- Dumping.

22. With regard to dumping, the experts agreed to consider the questions of both the disposal of nuclear wastes at sea and the disposal of radioactive wastes in the territory of the States parties.

23. The experts considered that the question of the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes constituted an important aspect of the treaty or convention and should therefore be given special attention, particularly with respect to the following principles:

- Positive affirmation of the need for the African States to commit themselves firmly to mastering nuclear technology for the purposes of economic and social development;
- The need for the African States to establish and strengthen mutual cooperation at the regional and subregional level in the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes;
- The right to apply for and obtain from the developed countries and from the IAEA assistance in the various aspects of the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

24. The experts also recognized the importance for African countries of making full use of the possibilities of cooperation and assistance offered to them by the IAEA. They noted that in the past many African countries had been unable to assess the opportunities offered them by cooperation with the IAEA in this domain. Following the example of the Latin American countries, African countries could maintain a more active presence in the IAEA.

The experts believed that Africa should have a particular interest in techniques for the development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes as the

continent harboured large reserves of uranium, which could only be used for the development of nuclear energy. The African States should also make better use of AFRA, the African Atomic Energy Agency.

25. The question of nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes was not examined in depth. It was noted that the Treaty of Tlatelolco, unlike that of Rarotonga, authorized so-called peaceful nuclear explosions. The experts agreed that the perception of that question has changed greatly and that it should be the object of further study.

26. Examining the obligations of nuclear-weapon States with respect to the denuclearized zone, the experts concluded that it was essential that they provide adequate guarantees of non-use of nuclear weapons against an African State (negative guarantees) and that they should take all appropriate measures to prevent any possible threat of nuclear-weapons use against a State within the zone. A discussion in depth took place with respect to the difficulties encountered by the Conference on Disarmament in achieving a common formula acceptable to all nuclear-weapon States. They also questioned the effectiveness of a denuclearized zone in Africa in the absence of satisfactory negative and positive guarantees by the nuclear-weapon States. In that context they agreed on the usefulness of undertaking individual consultations with those States in order to assess their flexibility and to explore the possibilities for an acceptable formula.

27. The experts agreed that a future treaty or convention should be submitted after its approval by the African States for adoption by the United Nations General Assembly so that the States Members of the United Nations would be obliged to respect the denuclearized status of Africa.

28. In the case of the Security Council, the experts agreed that it was important for that organ to take a decision guaranteeing Africa and the African States assistance in the case of threats of use of nuclear weapons in order to pre-empt the possibility of any such threat. The Security Council was also the appropriate organ for the submission of any complaint regarding such a threat in order to enable it to take immediate and effective action.

29. The experts agreed that the Treaty's verification machinery should be carefully worked out and applied so as to ensure that none of the activities prohibited by the Treaty were carried out and that nuclear energy was utilized only for the purposes of economic and social development. The procedures should be even more stringent in the case of South Africa in order to ensure the destruction of its nuclear-weapon stockpile. For that purpose, South Africa should be required to declare not only its stockpiles of weapons but of fissionable material and its capacity to produce them. The destruction procedures should involve the OAU, the Security Council, the nuclear-weapon States and the IAEA.

30. In order to ensure adequate verification and strengthen mutual confidence, all the States should declare their nuclear programmes and agree to subject them to verification procedures to be carried out within the framework of the Treaty by the OAU in cooperation with the IAEA.

31. Appropriate machinery should also be provided for complaints concerning non-compliance with the prohibitions established by the Treaty. The Treaty of Tlatelolco might serve as a model. Consideration might also be given to resort in the first instance to the OAU, which could then in turn decide to recommend action by the Security Council. The OAU could also submit the complaint to the IAEA in conformity with the verification procedures established by the Treaty.

32. The experts agreed that the system of verification to be established by the Treaty would depend on the nature and scope of the prohibitions established by the Treaty. They also considered that it would be for the parties to decide on the verification system they considered safest and most appropriate to guarantee Africa's denuclearized status. In any case, every State party to the treaty or convention should enter into a full safeguards agreement with the IAEA. The verification systems might also combine regional, subregional or continental elements. It would be for the parties to decide on concluding the kind of regional or subregional arrangement with the IAEA which would enable the IAEA, in conjunction with the OAU or pursuant to subregional agreements, to carry out the inspection and verification functions agreed on. However, while emphasizing the importance of verification, the experts also stressed that of State sovereignty, which would be the determining factor in establishing the procedures for verification and inspection.

33. The experts considered that, as a proof of their sincerity and a confidence-building measure, States could submit regular periodic reports to the designated authority on their compliance with the obligations of the Treaty in their nuclear activities.

34. In the case of a violation of the Treaty by a nuclear-weapon State, the procedure might be the submission of the matter to the Council of Ministers of the OAU, which would in turn submit it to the United Nations Security Council or the General Assembly.

35. In considering the institutions which might be established within the framework of the Treaty, the experts drew attention to their financial implications. It was accordingly agreed that the machinery to be established should be within the framework of the OAU. That machinery should be designed not only to supervise and verify compliance with the obligations established by the Treaty but to encourage and assist in the development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

36. A suggestion, which could be further pursued, was made to establish a committee to supervise the implementation of the Treaty. The committee would be made up of 12 members elected on a regional basis and would receive periodic reports from States and subregional groupings.

37. In concluding its work at this meeting, the group of experts wished to emphasize that, owing to a lack of time, it had been unable to complete its consideration of the following questions:

- Relations with other international agreements and similar zones;

- Technical clauses such as ratification, entry into force, duration, reservations and withdrawal.

Recommendations

38. The group of experts agreed to recommend that the Council of Ministers in considering the action to be taken on this report should take into account the following suggestions:

1. To bear in mind that the development of the international situation is favourable for the initiation of a process of implementation of the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa (1964) and the relevant provisions of the OAU declaration on security, disarmament and development (1985);

2. To decide to establish an intergovernmental group of African experts to consider this report in depth;

3. To request the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in consultation with the Secretary-General of the OAU, to convene a second meeting of the group of experts appointed by the United Nations in consultation with the OAU;

4. To decide to hold a joint meeting of the two groups of experts in conjunction with the second meeting of the group of experts appointed by the United Nations;

5. To decide to include in the agenda of the fifty-sixth session of the Council an item entitled "Implementation of the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa and Development of Nuclear Energy for Peaceful Purposes".

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GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT

Letter dated 18 October 1991 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you the attached text of President Bush's speech, broadcast on 27 September 1991, on his nuclear arms initiative.

I would be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(Signed) Thomas R. PICKERING

Annex

Speech by Mr. George Bush, President of the United States of America, on his nuclear arms initiative, broadcast on 27 September 1991

Tonight I'd like to speak with you about our future, and the future of the generations to come. The world has changed at a fantastic pace, with each day writing a fresh page of history before yesterday's ink has even dried. And most recently, we've seen the peoples of the Soviet Union turn to democracy and freedom and discard a system of government based on oppression and fear.

Like the East Europeans before them, they face the daunting challenge of building fresh political structures based on human rights, democratic principles, and market economies. Their task is far from easy, and far from over. They will need our help, and they will get it.

But these dramatic changes challenge our nation as well. Our country has always stood for freedom and democracy, and when the newly elected leaders of Eastern Europe grappled with forming their new Governments, they looked to the United States, they looked to American democratic principles in building their own free societies. Even the leaders of the USSR republics are reading The Federalist Papers, written by America's founders, to find new ideas and inspiration.

Today, America must lead again as it always has, as only it can. And we will. We must also provide the inspiration for lasting peace, and we will do that, too. We can now take steps in response to these dramatic developments, steps that can help the Soviet peoples in their quests for peace and prosperity.

More importantly, we can now take steps to make the world a less dangerous place than ever before in the nuclear age. A year ago I described a new strategy for American defenses, reflecting the world's changing security environment. That strategy shifted our focus away from the fear that preoccupied us for 40 years, the prospect of a global confrontation. Instead, it concentrated more on regional conflicts, such as the one we just faced in the Persian Gulf. I spelled out a strategic concept, guided by the need to maintain the forces required to exercise forward presence in key areas, to respond effectively in crisis, to maintain a credible nuclear deterrent, and to retain the national capacity to rebuild our forces, should that be needed.

We are now moving to reshape the United States military to reflect that concept. The new base force will be smaller by half a million than today's military, with fewer Army divisions, Air Force wings, Navy ships, and strategic nuclear forces. This new force will be versatile, able to respond around the world to challenges, old and new.

As I just mentioned, the changes that allowed us to adjust our security strategy a year ago have greatly accelerated. The prospect of a Soviet invasion into Western Europe, launched with little or no warning, is no longer a realistic threat. The Warsaw Pact has crumbled. In the Soviet Union, the advocates of democracy triumphed over a coup that would have restored the old system of repression. The reformers are now starting to fashion their own futures, moving even faster toward democracy's horizon.

New leaders in the Kremlin and the republics are now questioning the need for their huge nuclear arsenal. The Soviet nuclear stockpile now seems less an instrument of national security and more of a burden. As a result, we now have an unparalleled opportunity to change the nuclear posture of both the United States and the Soviet Union.

If we and the Soviet leaders take the right steps, some on our own, some on their own, some together, we can dramatically shrink the arsenal of the world's nuclear weapons. We can more effectively discourage the spread of nuclear weapons. We can rely more on defensive measures in our strategic relationship. We can enhance stability, and actually reduce the risk of nuclear war.

Now is the time to seize this opportunity. After careful study and consultations with my senior advisers, and after considering valuable counsel from Prime Minister Major, President Mitterrand, Chancellor Kohl and other allied leaders, I am announcing today a series of sweeping initiatives affecting every aspect of our nuclear forces on land, on ships and on aircraft.

I met again today with our Joint Chiefs of Staff, and I can tell you, they wholeheartedly endorse each of these steps. I'll begin with the category in which we will make the most fundamental change in nuclear forces in over 40 years: non-strategic or theater weapons.

Last year, I canceled United States plans to modernize our ground-launched theater nuclear weapons. Later, our NATO allies joined us in announcing that the alliance would propose the mutual elimination of all nuclear artillery shells from Europe as soon as short-range nuclear force negotiations began with the Soviets. But starting these talks now would only perpetuate these systems while we engage in lengthy negotiations. Last month's events not only permit, but indeed demand swifter, bolder action.

I am therefore directing that the United States eliminate its entire worldwide inventory of ground-launched, short-range - that is, theater, nuclear weapons. We will bring home and destroy all of our nuclear artillery shells and short-range ballistic missile warheads.

We will of course ensure that we preserve an effective air-delivered nuclear capability in Europe. That is essential to NATO's security. In turn, I have asked the Soviets to go down this road with us, to destroy their entire inventory of ground-launched theater nuclear weapons, not only their nuclear artillery and nuclear warheads for short-range ballistic missiles, but also

the theater systems the United States no longer has, systems like nuclear warheads for air defense missiles and nuclear land mines.

Recognizing further the major changes in the international military landscape, the United States will withdraw all tactical nuclear weapons from its surface ships and attack submarines, as well as those nuclear weapons associated with our land-based naval aircraft. This means removing all nuclear Tomahawk cruise missiles from United States ships and submarines, as well as nuclear bombs aboard aircraft carriers.

The bottom line is that under normal circumstances, our ships will not carry tactical nuclear weapons. Many of these land and sea-based warheads will be dismantled and destroyed. Those remaining will be secured in central areas where they would be available if necessary in a future crisis.

Again, there is every reason for the Soviet Union to match our actions by removing all tactical nuclear weapons from its ships and attack submarines, by withdrawing nuclear weapons for land-based naval aircraft, and by destroying many of them and consolidating what remains at central locations.

I urge them to do so.

No category of nuclear weapons has received more attention than those in our strategic arsenals. The Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, START, which President Gorbachev and I signed last July, was the culmination of almost a decade's work. It calls for substantial stabilizing reductions and effective verification.

Prompt ratification by both parties is essential. But I also believe the time is right to use START as a springboard to achieve additional stabilizing changes. First, to further reduce tensions, I am directing that all United States strategic bombers immediately stand down from their alert posture. As a comparable gesture, I call upon the Soviet Union to confine its mobile missiles to their garrisons, where they will be safer and more secure.

Second, the United States will immediately stand down from alert all intercontinental ballistic missiles scheduled for deactivation under START. Rather than waiting for the Treaty's reduction plan to run its full seven-year course, we will accelerate elimination of these systems once START is ratified. I call upon the Soviet Union to do the same.

Third, I am terminating the development of the mobile Peacekeeper ICBM as well as the mobile portions of the small ICBM program. The small single warhead ICBM will be our only remaining ICBM modernization program, and I call upon the Soviets to terminate any and all programs for future ICBMs with more than one warhead, and to limit ICBM modernization to one type of single warhead missile, just as we have done.

Fourth, I am canceling the current program to build a replacement for the nuclear short-range attack missile for our strategic bombers.

And fifth, as a result of the strategic nuclear weapons adjustments that I've just outlined, the United States will streamline its command and control procedures, allowing us to more effectively manage our strategic nuclear forces.

As the system works now, the Navy commands the submarine part of our strategic deterrent while the Air Force commands the bomber and land-based elements. But as we reduce our strategic forces, the operational command structure must be as direct as possible, and I therefore approve the recommendation of Secretary Cheney and the Joint Chiefs to consolidate operational command of these forces into a United States strategic command under one commander, with participation from both services.

Since the 1970s the most vulnerable and unstable part of the United States and Soviet nuclear forces has been intercontinental missiles with more than one warhead. Both sides have these ICBMs in fixed silos in the ground where they are more vulnerable than missiles on submarines. I propose that the United States and the Soviet Union seek early agreement to eliminate from their inventories all ICBMs with multiple warheads. After developing a timetable acceptable to both sides, we could rapidly move to modify or eliminate these systems under procedures already established in the START agreement.

In short, such an action would take away the single most unstable part of our nuclear arsenals.

But there is more to do. The United States and the Soviet Union are not the only nations with ballistic missiles. Some 15 nations have them now and in less than a decade, that number could grow to 20.

The recent conflict in the Persian Gulf demonstrates in no uncertain terms that the time has come for strong action on this growing threat to world peace. Accordingly, I am calling on the Soviet leadership to join us in taking immediate, concrete steps to permit the limited deployment of non-nuclear defenses to protect against limited ballistic missile strikes, whatever their source, without undermining the credibility of existing deterrent forces.

And we will intensify our effort to curb nuclear and missile proliferation. These two efforts will be mutually reinforcing. To foster cooperation, the United States soon will propose additional initiatives in the area of ballistic missile early warning.

Finally, let me discuss yet another opportunity for cooperation that can make our world safer. During last month's attempted coup in Moscow, many Americans asked me if I thought Soviet nuclear weapons were under adequate control. I do not believe that America was at increased risk of nuclear attack during those tense days. But I do believe more can be done to ensure the safe handling and dismantling of Soviet nuclear weapons.

Therefore, I propose that we begin discussions with the Soviet Union to explore joint technical cooperation in three areas: first, we should explore joint technical cooperation on the safe and environmentally responsible storage, transportation, dismantling, and destruction of nuclear warheads; second, we should discuss existing arrangements for the physical security and safety of nuclear weapons, and how these might be enhanced. And third, we should discuss nuclear command and control arrangements, and how these might be improved to provide more protection against the unauthorized or accidental use of nuclear weapons.

My friend French President Mitterrand offered a similar idea a short while ago. After further consultations with the alliance, and when the leadership in the USSR is ready, we will begin this effort.

The initiatives that I'm announcing build on the new defense strategy that I set out a year ago, one that shifted our focus away from the prospect of global confrontation. We're consulting with our allies on the implementation of many of these steps, which fit well with the new post-cold war strategy and force posture that we've developed in NATO.

As we implement these initiatives, we will closely watch how the new Soviet leadership responds. We expect our bold initiatives to meet with equally bold steps on the Soviet side. If this happens, further cooperation is inevitable. If it does not, then an historic opportunity will have been lost.

Regardless, let no one doubt, we will still retain the necessary strength to protect our security and that of our allies and to respond as necessary.

In addition, regional instabilities, the spread of weapons of mass destruction, and as we saw during the conflict in the Gulf, territorial ambitions of power-hungry tyrants still require us to maintain a strong military to protect our national interests and to honor commitments to our allies. Therefore, we must implement a coherent plan for a significantly smaller but fully capable military, one that enhances stability, but is still sufficient to convince any potential adversary that the cost of aggression would exceed any possible gain.

We can safely afford to take the steps I've announced today, steps that are designed to reduce the dangers of miscalculation in a crisis. But to do so, we must also pursue vigorously those elements of our strategic modernization program that serve the same purpose. We must fully fund the B-2 and SDI program. We can make radical changes in the nuclear postures of both sides to make them smaller, safer and more stable. But the United States must maintain modern nuclear forces, including the strategic triad, and thus ensure the credibility of our deterrent.

Some will say that these initiatives call for a budget windfall for domestic programs, but the peace dividend I seek is not measured in dollars, but in greater security. In the near term, some of these steps may even cost

money. Given the ambitious plan I have already proposed to reduce United States defense spending by 25 per cent, we cannot afford to make any unwise or unwarranted cuts in the defense budget that I have submitted to Congress. I am counting on congressional support to ensure we have the funds necessary to restructure our forces prudently and implement the decisions that I have outlined tonight.

Twenty years ago, when I had the opportunity to serve this country as ambassador to the United Nations, I once talked about the vision that was in the minds of the United Nations founders, how they dreamed of a new age when the great powers of the world would cooperate in peace as they had as allies in war.

Today, I consulted with President Gorbachev, and while he hasn't had time to absorb the details, I believe the Soviet response will clearly be positive. I also spoke with President Yeltsin, and he had a similar reaction - positive, hopeful. Now the Soviet people and their leaders can shed the heavy burden of a dangerous and costly nuclear arsenal which has threatened world peace for the past five decades. They can join us in these dramatic moves toward a new world of peace and security.

Tonight, as I see the drama of democracy unfolding around the globe, perhaps we are closer to that new world than ever before. The future is ours to influence, to shape, to mold, and while we must not gamble that future, neither can we forfeit the historic opportunity now before us.

It has been said, "Destiny is not a matter of chance. It is a matter of choice; it is not a thing to be waited for. It's a thing to be achieved." The United States has always stood where duty required us to stand, and now let them say that we led where destiny required us to lead, to a more peaceful, hopeful future. We cannot give a more precious gift to the children of the world.